

D-755
Williamsburg Survey District
Williamsburg
Late 19th and early 20th centuries
Private and public

The crossroads village of Williamsburg is defined by a small collection of mid to late nineteenth and early twentieth century frame structures clustered in and around the intersection of six county and state roads less than a mile north of the Northwest Fork of the Nanticoke River, otherwise known as Marshy Hope Creek. The early history of the village is somewhat clouded by inexact records, but a fledgling crossroads village was forming at this location during the first decades of the nineteenth century; known informally as "Slabtown" or "Bunker Hill" by local residents. Slabtown referred to the preponderance of rough cut slabs produced by saw mills that were used in the construction of rough fences, whereas Bunker Hill was inspired evidently by some brawling rivals at local taverns.

The village developed largely on land held by Dyer Williams, who sold part of "Lunster" or "Limster" to John and Levin Woolen in June 1817. Five years later, Dyer Williams transferred another small Lunster lot of 1 ½ acres to David Andrews. John Woolen, a wheelright, is credited with promoting the name change to Williamsburg during the 1840s.

The most defining mid nineteenth century event for Williamsburg and Dorchester County in general was the construction of the Dorchester & Delaware Railroad between Seaford, Delaware and Cambridge in 1867-68. The new railroad line was built directly through the middle of the village, thereby creating an economic stimulus shared by the

region during the decade that followed. Williamsburg grew modestly with the construction of the railroad and was one of the principal trading centers in northeastern Dorchester County. A short distance below the village was Williams' Wharf, a shipping point on the Northwest Fork of the Nanticoke. During the post Civil War years, Ezekial Williams and his son-in-law, William G. Smith, operated Williams & Smith General Store, one of two mercantile establishments in the town that also included the town's post office. When Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson published their atlases of the Eastern Shore counties in 1877, Williamsburg boasted a population of 75, a dozen dwellings, two stores, a post office, railroad station, blacksmith, and carpenter, justice of the peace, constable and three millers in the village and vicinity. With its half dozen county roads, new railroad linkage and nearby wharf, Williamsburg was poised to become the commercial and industrial center in northeastern Dorchester County.

Despite its nearly seventy-five year history and current prominence, Williamsburg would soon be rivaled by a new village just two miles to the southwest where John Martin Hurlock was promoting the growth of a new community on the Dorchester & Delaware. At the time, the village of Hurlock was only defined by the railroad station, John Martin Hurlock's store, and a Methodist camp meeting location, but within the span of ten to fifteen years the two villages vied for the region's commerce, industry and growing population. A pivotal event in 1888 was the relocation of the old Washington Chapel into the village of Hurlock, which instigated the construction of the Williamsburg M. E. Church the following year in 1889. Another event, more instrumental to the ultimate success and growth of Hurlock and decline of

Williamsburg, was the construction of the Baltimore & Eastern Shore Railroad between Claiborne, in Talbot County, and Ocean City between 1886 and 1890.

The charter for the new railroad and the declaration of the new right-of-way through Hurlock spurred a wave of new construction and investment in the newer town. The older of the two villages, Williamsburg, settled into a slower pace with modest growth during the last decades of the nineteenth century. At the turn of the twentieth century Williamsburg was not much larger than it had been twenty-five years earlier, although the village did have its own fruit and vegetable cannery, a steam flour mill, and approximately twenty-five dwellings. As Hurlock's growth outpaced any other town in Dorchester County aside from Cambridge, Williamsburg stagnated in growth during the twentieth century to remain a small rural crossroads defined by a few dozen dwellings.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. D-755

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Williamsburg
other Williamsburg Survey District, Slabtown, Bunker's Hill

2. Location

street and number _____ not for publication
city, town _____ vicinity
county _____

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Multiple owners
street and number _____ telephone _____
city, town _____ state _____ zip code _____

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dorchester County Clerk of Court liber folio
city, town _____ tax map _____ tax parcel _____ tax ID number _____

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ____ Contributing Resource in National Register District
____ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
____ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
____ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
____ Recorded by HABS/HAER
____ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
____ Other: _____

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count	
____ district	____ public	____ agriculture	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	____ private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	16	10 buildings
____ structure	____ both	____ defense	____	____ sites
____ site		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic	1	____ structures
____ object		____ education	____	____ objects
		____ funerary	17	10 Total
		____ government	____	
		____ health care	____	
		____ industry	____	
		____ landscape		
		____ recreation/culture		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion		
		____ social		
		____ transportation		
		____ work in progress		
		____ unknown		
		____ vacant/not in use		
		____ other:		

Number of Contributing Resources
previously listed in the Inventory

7. Description

Inventory No. D-755

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

The village of Williamsburg is located in northeastern Dorchester County in the Williamsburg Election District approximately two miles northeast of Hurlock. The principal highway interesting the village, MD 307 parallels the railroad right-of-way, originally the Dorchester & Delaware and after 1883 the Seaford and Cambridge branch line of the Philadelphia, Wilmington, & Baltimore Railroad, and ultimately part of the Penn Central Railroad system. Five other county roads converge at this location. From the northwest enters Williamsburg Church Road, from the northeast Whitely Road from the east River Road, from the south the Harrison Ferry Road and from the west Milligantown Road. The stock of historic structures in the village date from the 1870s through the 1920s, and there are approximately sixteen (16) contributing resources that define the village. Prominent among the buildings are the former Williamsburg M. E. Church (D-759) and the William G. Smith house on the east side of the Palmer's Mill Road. Along the railroad right-of-way are industrial storage silos for agricultural produce owned by the firm W.O. Whitely & Son.

The earliest housing in Williamsburg dates to the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century, and the most elaborate structure from this period is the William G. Smith house, located on the south side of the village on the east side of Palmer's Mill Road. The two-story, ell-shaped main block is distinctive for its sawn cornice and corner pilasters. Supported on low brick foundation, the exterior is clad with asbestos shingles, and the medium pitched roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The first and second stories are lighted by six-over-six sash windows. Attached to the back of the front block is a two-story service wing also featuring sawn cornice blocks. Due north of the William G. Smith house is a turn of the twentieth century frame dwelling at 6677 Palmer's Mill Road. The asymmetrical planned two-and-a-half story frame dwelling is dominated by a central pyramidal roof with gable roofed extensions from most sides.

Located along the railroad right-of-way on the southwest side of the village is the industrial/commercial complex of W. O. Whitely & Son, which is composed of a series of large round ribbed metal storage silos.

One of the other distinctive buildings in the village is the former Williamsburg M. E. Church (D-759), which stands on the corner where Williamsburg Church Road enters the village from the north and intersects with Williamsburg Road. The single-story frame church was erected in 1889 and is now the location of "No More Walls" Worship Center. The ell-shaped front was formerly distinguished by a tall entrance and bell tower topped by a narrow broach spire which has been removed. The building retains point arch Gothic windows filled with colored glass.

8. Significance

Inventory No. D-755

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Specific dates

Architect/Builder

Construction dates

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The crossroads village of Williamsburg is defined by a small collection of mid to late nineteenth and early twentieth century frame structures clustered in and around the intersection of six state and county roads less than a mile north of the Northwest fork of the Nanticoke River. The early history of the village is somewhat clouded by incomplete records, but a fledging crossroads village was forming at this location during the first decades of the nineteenth century, known informally as "Slabtown" or "Bunker Hill" by local residents.¹ Slabtown referred to the preponderance of rough cut slabs produced by saw mills that were used in the construction of fences, while Bunker Hill was inspired evidently by the brawling rivals at a local tavern.²

The village developed on land held by Dyer Williams, who sold part of "Lunster" or "Limster" to John and Levin Woolen in June 1817.³ Five years later, Dyer Williams sold another small Lunster lot of 1 ½ acres to David Andrews.⁴ John Woolen, a wheelwright, is credited with promoting a name change to Williamsburg during the 1840s.⁵

The most defining mid nineteenth century event for Williamsburg and Dorchester County in general was the construction of the Dorchester & Delaware Railroad between Seaford, Delaware and Cambridge in 1867-68. The new railroad line was built directly through the middle of the village, thereby creating an economic stimulus repeated across the county and region during the decade that followed. Williamsburg grew modestly with the construction of the railroad and was the principal commercial and transportation center for northeastern Dorchester County. A short distance below the village Williams' Wharf was a shipping point on the Northwest Fork of the Nanticoke. During the post

¹ Elias Jones, *New Revised History of Dorchester County*, (Reprint, 1966 from 1925 edition, originally printed in 1902). Pp. 94-96.

² *Ibid.*

³ Dorchester County Land Record, ER 4/484, 4 June 1817, Dorchester County Courthouse.

⁴ Dorchester County Land Record, ER 9/178, 5 April 1823, Dorchester County Courthouse.

⁵ Jones, pp. 94-96.

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Name Williamsburg Survey District
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 1

Civil War years, Ezekial Williams and his son-in-law William G. Smith operated one of two stores in the village that included the town's post office.⁶ When Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson published their atlases of Eastern Shore counties in 1877, Williamsburg boasted a population of 75⁷, a dozen dwellings, two stores, a post office, railroad station and nearby mills.⁸ With its half dozen county roads and new railroad linkage, Williamsburg was poised to become the commercial and industrial center in northeastern Dorchester County, although two miles to the southwest John Martin Hurlock was promoting the growth of a new village on the Dorchester & Delaware centered around his store and a Methodist camp meeting ground. The two villages vied for commerce, industry and population during the decade that followed. A pivotal event in 1888 was the relocation of the old Washington Chapel into the village of Hurlock, which instigated the construction of the Williamsburg M. E. Church the following year in 1889. Another event, more instrumental to the ultimate success and growth of Hurlock and decline of Williamsburg, was the construction of the Baltimore and Eastern Shore Railroad between Claiborne, in Talbot County and Ocean City between 1886 and 1890.

The charter for the new railroad and the declaration the new right-of-way spurred a wave of new construction and investment in Hurlock, and the older of the two villages, Williamsburg, settled into a slower pace with modest growth during the last years of the nineteenth century. At the turn of the twentieth century Williamsburg was not much larger than it had been twenty-five years earlier, although the village did have a fruit and vegetable cannery and a steam flour mill and approximately twenty-five dwellings.⁹ As Hurlock continued to grow and attract new industry, Williamsburg stagnated in growth during the twentieth century and it remains a small rural crossroads defined by a few dozen dwellings.

⁶ John L. Graham, ed. *The 1877 Atlases and Other Early Maps of the Eastern Shore of Maryland*, Wicomico Bicentennial Committee, p. 82.

⁷ *The Maryland Directory*, J. Frank Lewis & Co., Baltimore, 1878, pp. 255-56.

⁸ *Op cit.*

⁹ Jones, p. 97.

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pp. 94-96, Elias Jones, *New Revised History of Dorchester County* (Reprint, 1966 from 1925 edition, originally printed in 1902)

p. 94, Williamsburg District, laid out as a separate election district in 1859. First election held in Williamsburg in 1860.

Known initially as "Bunker's Hill" Henry Jones, a teacher, land surveyor and farmer built the first house at the crossroads in 1804. The house was described by Enoch Lowe, Esq. Community nicknamed "Bunker's Hill" due to rivalries between visitors who frequented the local tavern. The community was also known informally as "Slabtown" due to the preponderance of rough slab timber used in fencing. John Woolen, a local wheelwright, petitioned to have the name changed formally to Williamsburg around 1840.

1902 assessment- two stores of general merchandise
one cabinet and wheelwright shop
one flour mill (steam)
one fruit and vegetable cannery
one public school
one Methodist Episcopal Church
twenty-five dwellings

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Number 8 Page 3

Chain of Title
Map 6, Parcel 57

MLB 785/446

Karl Heinz Vogel and Dorothea Marie Vogel

to

12.31.2006

Karl Heinz Vogel et al.

1. Lot No. 1

PLC 143/141

Robert O. Whitely and MD National Bank

to

6..25.1965

H. Melvin Williamson

1. Lot No. 1

PLC 128/495

Perry W. Moore, executor of Last Will and Testament of
Dwight L. Moore

to

7.12.1962

Robert O. Whitely

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RSM 77/397

Charles E. Edmundson, Trustee

to

2.23.1952

Dwight L. Moore

RSM 42/85-86

William D. Gould, Assignee

to

11.27.1940

Federal Farm Mortgage Company

WLR 7/304

The Eastern Shore Land Improvement Company

to

1.24.1914

Dwight L. Moore

...described in a certificate of survey dated 11.9.1874...made
by John W. B. Todd for Ezekial Williams

WLR 5/643

Laura V. Smith, widow

to

3.24.1913

The Eastern Shore Land Improvement Company
(W. Grason Winterbottom, President, Emerson C. Harrington, Sec.
and Treas. of the Eastern Shore Land Improvement Co....being
the homeplace of Laura V. Smith....

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Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 5

Will Book
EWL 2/424

Last Will and Testament of Ezekial Williams

to, daughter

Written
1.6.1879
Proved
5.8.1883

Item: I give and devise unto my daughter Laura V. Smith, wife of William G. Smith all that tract or parcel of land whereon the said Wm G. Smith and wife now lives at Williamsburg...being part of my home farm....

I also will and desire that the Store house and lot at Williamsburg including a wood lot on the east side of the road...

1878

The Maryland Directory, J. Frank Lewis & Co., Baltimore, 1878.

p. 255-56

Williamsburg

Is on the D. & D. R. R. 20 miles from Cambridge, and near Williams' Wharf on the Nanticoke River, the shipping point. Climate mild; vicinity healthy. Lands sandy and clay loams, three-quarters cleared; can be bought at \$20 per acre; yields 12 bus. wheat, 20 oats, 200 potatoes, 25 corn and 3 tons hay. Churches and schools convenient. Population 75. J. H. Williams, Postmaster.

Blacksmith

Pierson, John

Carpenter

Todd, W. W.

Constable

Medford, John

General Merchandise

Turpin, J. B.

Williams & Smith

Justice of the Peace

Enoch Lowe

Millers

Conway, C. B.

Conway, Paul

Wright, W. W.

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1877

Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson Atlas

Crossroads village with Dorchester & Delaware bisecting village
Store and Post office on south side of railroad
Store on north side of railroad
Eight to ten dwellings

Williams & Smith, Dealers in Dry Goods, Groceries, Notions,
Hats, Caps, Boots, Shoes, Ready Made Clothing, A full line of
Goods constantly on hand. Store at Williamsburg, P. O.

1849

Earliest reference to Williamsburg in land records

Dorchester County
Land Record
ER 9/178

Dyer Williams, of Dorchester County

to

4.5.1823

David Andrews

"Lunster" 1 ½ acre

Dorchester County
Land Record
ER 4/484

"Diah" Williams, Dorchester County

to

6.4.1817

Levin Woolen and John Woolen

"Limnster"

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Dorchester County Land Records, various volumes, Dorchester County Courthouse.

Graham, John L. *The 1877 Atlases and Other Early Maps of the Eastern Shore of Maryland*, Salisbury, MD: Wicomico County Bicentennial Committee, 1976. 82.

The Maryland Directory, J. Frank Lewis & Company, Baltimore, 1878. .

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 20 acres
Acreage of historical setting 20 acres
Quadrangle name Federalsburg, MD Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The metes and bounds of this property are coincidental with the current boundary of the lot.

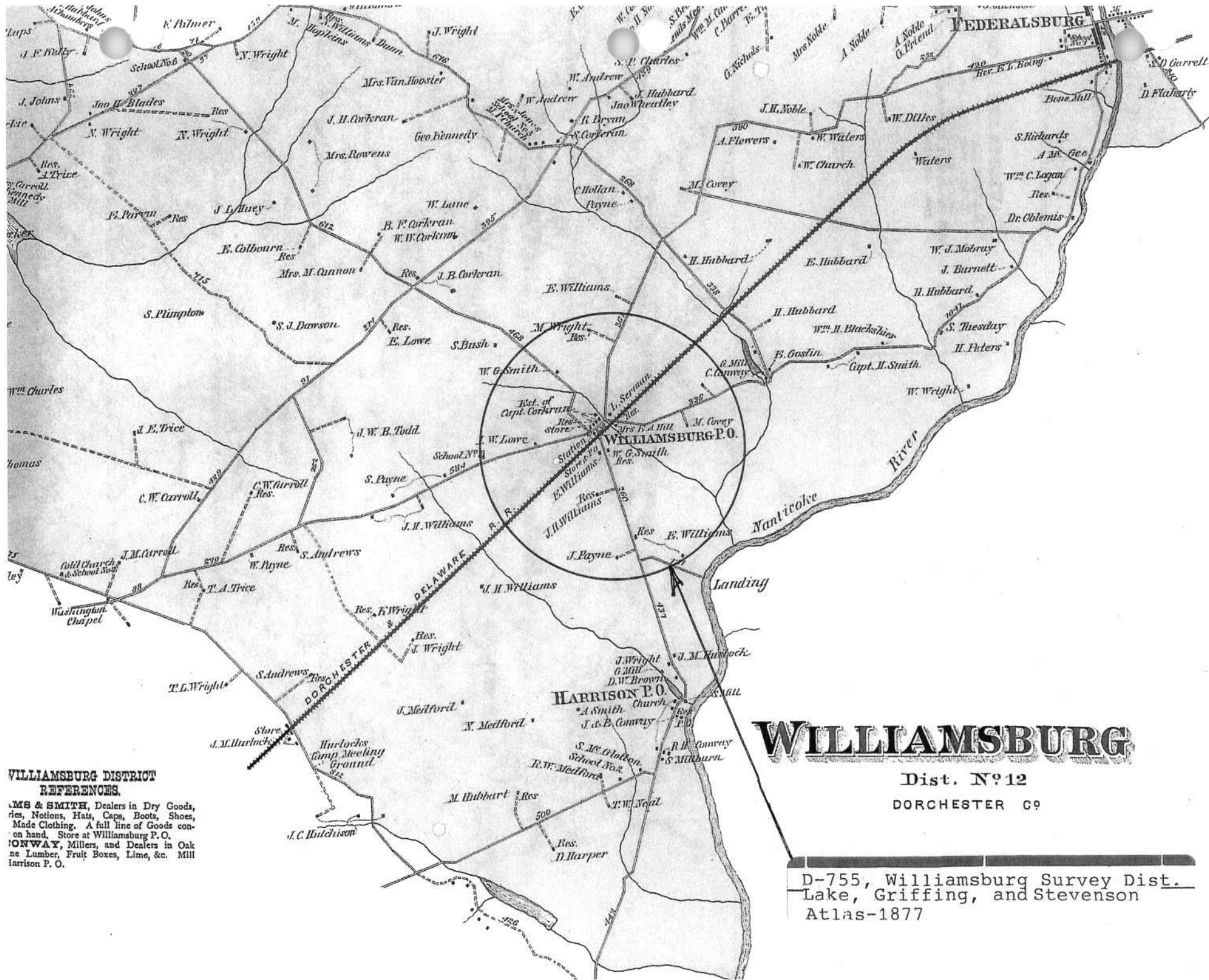
11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Paul B. Touart, Architectural Historian		
organization	Chesapeake Country Heritage & Preservation	date	1/29/2008
street & number	Cedar Hill, P. O. Box 5	telephone	410-651-1094
city or town	Westover	state	Maryland 21871

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600



**WILLIAMSBURG DISTRICT
REFERENCES.**

MS & SMITH, Dealers in Dry Goods,
ries, Notions, Hats, Caps, Boots, Shoes,
Made Clothing. A full line of Goods con-
on hand. Store at Williamsburg P.O.
ONWAY, Millers, and Dealers in Oak
ne Lumber, Fruit Boxes, Lime, &c. Mill
arrison P.O.

WILLIAMSBURG

Dist. No 12

DORCHESTER CO

D-755, Williamsburg Survey Dist.
Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson
Atlas-1877





W.O. WHITELEY
& SON
WILLIAMSBURG, MD.

C&D

D-755
WILLIAMSBURG SURVEY DISTRICT
WILLIAMSBURG, DIXIE TOWN C., MD.
LOOKING SOUTHWEST FROM RAILROAD
NEZ./MD. HISTORICAL TRUST
11/08, PAUL TOWN, PHOTOGRAPHER



D-755

Williamsburg Survey District
Williamsburg, DIXIE STREET & MD.

LOOKING NORTH FROM BALCONY
WEG. / MD HISTORICAL TRUST

11/08, PAUL TOWART, PHOTOGRAPHER



A-755

Williamsburg Survey District
(Smith House)

Williamsburg; Documented by and.

NW Elevation

11/08, Pam Tourist, Pittsburgh
NEZ / MD Historic Trust